

This is an Official DPHHS HAN Advisory

Distributed via the DPHHS Health Alert Network (HAN) System

Friday, March 10, 2006 15:30 MT (3:30 PM MST)

Potentially Contaminated Foods Delivered to Schools Throughout the State.

The attached press release concerning potentially contaminated foods delivered to schools throughout the state has been distributed to the media. This HAN message is intended to provide you with additional information to assist health agencies with responding to any questions that may arise. This information is intended as an update to the previous email sent to local sanitarians on 3/6/06 from the DPHHS Food & Consumer Safety Program.

OPI is making arrangements to track and pick up the recalled items. We are requesting that local nurses and/or sanitarians check with local schools listed on the attached spreadsheet to confirm their receipt of this important information from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and ensure that products of concern have been taken out of circulation.

At this time we are not aware of any illness resulting from the products and this recall is being issued as a precaution. As stated in the attached press release, ingestion of ammonia could result in an acute illness characterized by headache, nausea, vomiting, and a burning throat. Symptoms usually occur within an hour of exposure, and there are no known long-term impacts.

The information below outlines some of the steps taken thus far:

- DPHHS responded to the first notification of possible contamination, in early February, by advising that exposed foods be held and not served.
- OPI initiated contact with school programs to place a hold on potentially contaminated items.
- DPHHS initiated communication with FDA immediately. FDA guidance indicated that there was a low probability that ammonia would penetrate packaging.
- DPHHS proceeded to sample products and submit to FDA lab for testing.
- Testing indicated the presence of ammonia inside the packaging of 2 products.
- There is no acceptable level established for ammonia and based on testing results, DPHHS has determined that it is not possible to ensure that any of the products present during the leak are safe for consumption.
- DPHHS has collaborated with the Office of Public Instruction to eliminate any possibility of consumption of the exposed food products.
- OPI issued additional guidance (attached) to track all potential food items involved in this matter

Again, the Office of Public Instruction has initiated the retrieval of listed food products from schools and distribution centers. DPHHS requests that local health departments verify that schools within their jurisdictions have appropriately separated and secured the listed food products. Please contact DPHHS at 444-2408 for additional information.

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The goal Montana's Health Alert Network is to transmit information to local public health authorities as quickly as possible, and assign a suitable priority to the message that is sensitive to the impact of a health-related event providing information of immediate utility relative to the public health and safety of Montanans. For questions or comments relative to Montana's HAN system you may contact the Montana State HAN Coordinator Jim Aspevig at <mailto:jaspevig@mt.gov> or the Associate HAN Coordinator Gerry Wheat at <mailto:gwheat@mt.gov>

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: provides general information regarding a situation or opportunity; does not typically require immediate action.

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